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UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000181

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SUBJECT: Darfur: Pres. Bashir Reiterates Rejection of UN
Peacekeeping Operation; Denies Chinese Pressure

Ref: Khartoum 00171

¶1. (U) During a February 5 address at the National Records Authority in Khartoum, President Bashir clearly reiterated Sudan's opposition to a UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur, stating that the Sudanese were the children and grandchildren of those revolutionaries who killed Major General Charles Gordon and that Sudan would not hand over itself to the greedy. The account, carried by Omdurman Sudan Television, the Sudan News Agency, Al-Jazirah, and Al-Sahafah, an Arabic daily, cited Bashir as stating, "International troops were not and will never be deployed in Darfur. The African troop mandate in the region will never be changed into a UN one." He added, in reference to the U.S. and the UK, that "If you want to invade our country, then come, we will teach you a lesson you will never forget."

¶2. (U) In a February 5 interview with Al-Sudani, an Arabic daily, President Bashir denied that the recent visit by Chinese President Hu to Khartoum (reftel) had carried any demands from the U.S. regarding Darfur. He said rather that the Chinese demand was limited to Sudan's moving forward in the enforcement of the Abuja Agreement and improving the situation on the ground. Bashir said President Hu reiterated China's commitment to providing full support to Sudan in implementing its declared program in Darfur. Bashir expressed surprise at suggestions that the Chinese president carried U.S. demands to Khartoum on the issue of international forces, and said that China had not served as a conduit for U.S. pressure on Sudan. He added that President Hu was more concerned with listening to Sudan's vision of dealing with the crisis, and that he had responded positively to Sudan's explanation regarding all aspects of the situation in Darfur.

¶3. (U) President Bashir's remarks were echoed on January 31 in El Fasher, Darfur, by Assistant to the President Nafie Ali Nafie, who told a rally that the Sudanese government rejected foreign interference in Darfur. The account, carried by Omdurman Sudan Television, was similar to that of Al-Rai Al-Aam, an Arabic daily, which stated that Nafie confirmed the government's refusal to permit the deployment of hybrid or joint forces in Darfur. Nafie criticized unnamed neighboring countries, calling on them not to participate in plots against Sudan or to become a "cat's paw" for its colonization.

POWERS